

# Australian Canine Eye Scheme (ACES)

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR OWNERS

**The Australian Canine Eye Scheme (ACES) offers dog breeders and affiliated breed clubs a nationally standardised system of testing for inherited and non-inherited eye conditions, in all registered breeds.**

Supported by the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA®) and the Australian National Kennel Council, ACES aims to assist breeders seeking to reduce the incidence of inherited eye defects, while also providing a uniform system of data recording within Australia that is compatible with eye schemes overseas. **Access to the scheme is entirely voluntary.**

Eye certificates are available Australia-wide via an AVA-appointed examining panel of registered veterinary eye specialists, who are also members of the AVA. Further details for owners beyond this 'Quick Reference' guide can be found in the **ACES Information for Owners** document available as a download from the AVA website:

[www.ava.com.au/aces](http://www.ava.com.au/aces)

**Age and frequency of testing** - in general, the best age for eye testing is before a dog has reached one year old and thereafter on an annual basis. In the majority of breeds affected by non-congenital hereditary defects (i.e. those not present at birth) a certificate less than 12 months old is needed for it to be 'current'. In some breeds where evidence of a vision-threatening abnormality is detectable soon after the eyes first open, it is necessary to test young pups (between 5 - 8 weeks of age) under separate litter screening rules. These are screening tests provided for the information of breeders, and do not need to be repeated until individual pups are re-presented after one year of age.

**Breed schedules listing eye diseases confirmed or suspected to be inherited in dog breeds, are used by the examining panellists when they fill out ACES forms:**

**Schedule 1** lists the known eye diseases in those breeds where there is enough scientific information to show that the condition is inherited. For breeds with a listed Schedule 1 condition, a certificate is issued with results of 'affected' or 'unaffected'.

**Schedule 2** lists those breeds in which conditions are at this stage, only suspected of being inherited and therefore remain 'under investigation'. For breeds in Schedule 2, comments are confined to a descriptive record of any abnormalities and there is no 'affected' or 'unaffected' result. Eye conditions will appear on Schedule 2 if ACES Panellists feel as a group it is warranted due to new evidence, the number of cases being detected, or breed club concerns. Breed conditions in Schedule 2 are moved to Schedule 1 *only* if there is sufficient weight of evidence that they are inherited.

A third schedule lists the veterinary eye specialists appointed to serve as ACES Panellists, who are authorised to issue ACES eye certificates.

### Distribution of ACES results

There are three copies of each serially numbered ACES form. The owner retains the white (top) copy, the yellow copy is sent to AVA as a permanent record and for data analysis by ANKC and the blue copy is retained by the ACES Panellist. At the owner's request, a photocopy of the white (top) copy may be made by the ACES Panellist, to be forwarded to the owner's regular veterinary practice.

ACES results are reported for each breed as a **Closed Register (confidential to the owner)** unless the relevant ANKC National Breed Council (following full consultation with affiliated breed clubs in each State) requests **Open Register listing (all results released for public information)**. Any owner has the right to appeal the results of an ACES examination.

### Breeding from affected dogs

Generally, the professional opinion of ACES Panellists would encourage owners to avoid breeding from dogs affected by known or suspected hereditary eye conditions, due to the risk of progeny being affected. There are exceptions to this, applicable amongst ANKC affiliated breed clubs that have adopted a voluntary Breeders' Code.



*Make a better breeding decision  
- for healthy eyes and vision*

## The ACES Eye Examination Certificate has four main parts:

1. The top section is completed by the owner or agent prior to the test. It contains the animal's registration details, permanent identification, owner's details, information regarding previous examinations and any genetic testing performed that is relevant to the dog's eye status.
2. The upper middle section is completed by the ACES Panellist and is used to record all abnormalities of the eye and adnexa (i.e. lids and surrounding structures) including known or suspected acquired defects, with provision for a diagrammatic record to be kept on file.
3. The lower middle section is also completed by the ACES Panellist and details the Inherited Eye Disease status, according to those conditions listed for the breed under Schedule 1.
4. The bottom section is signed and dated by the ACES Panellist.

## The ACES Litter Screening Certificate has three main parts:

1. The top section is completed by the owner or agent prior to the test. It contains the registration and permanent identification details of both sire and dam, owner's details and confirmation of the number of pups in the litter.
2. The middle section is completed by the ACES Panellist and details the Inherited Eye Disease status for each puppy according to the Schedule 1 Litter Screening Checklist.
3. The bottom section is signed and dated by the ACES Panellist.

## Documents that should be brought to an ACES eye screen examination:

- ❑ The **original registration certificate** issued by an Australian State Canine Control or the registering authority in the country of origin, endorsed with a record of permanent identification (microchip or tattoo).
- ❑ Any **change of ownership documentation**, or original export certificate issued by the country of origin.
- ❑ The **most recent eye certificate** issued in Australia or overseas.
- ❑ Copy of any **genetic test result** for a relevant eye condition issued by a recognised testing laboratory, that the owner wishes to see entered on the certificate for later inclusion in the ANKC Inherited Diseases database.
- ❑ Copy of the **Application for Litter Registration form submitted to the Canine Control in your State** (for litter screening certificates), showing registration details of both sire and dam, including a signed Certificate of Service.

If any of these documents are held but are not presented, the examination may proceed but results will not be made available (even verbally) and the certificate will not be issued until the missing documents are sighted.



## For more information

Copies of the **ACES Rules and Procedures** are available as a download from the AVA website [www.ava.com.au/aces](http://www.ava.com.au/aces) or through the Canine Control offices in each State.



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